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Ken Pierce

Dance notation systems in late 17th-century France

SOMETIME around 1674 Louis XIV ordered Pierre Beauchamp, dance director at the Académie Royale de Musique (the Opéra) and Louis's dancing master, to find a way to put dance on paper—that is, to develop a system of dance notation.¹ We do not know whether Louis gave a reason for this order, beyond the formulaic 'Car tel est notre plaisir'. In any event, Beauchamp obeyed, and by 1684 had worked out a notation system that enabled him to record the chaconne from Lully's *Phaeton*.² The system that Beauchamp invented was widely used during the 18th century to record ballroom and theatre dances, and to ensure that dances were transmitted and learned correctly by dancing masters and their students.

But Beauchamp was not the only one in late 17th-century France attempting to develop a dance notation system. During the 1680s there were at least three other systems under development—those of André Lorin, Jean Favier and a certain Sieur De la Haise.³ None of these proved as popular as Beauchamp's.

The question of how dance might be recorded on paper must have been in the air during this period; those wrestling with the problem in Paris or at court would surely have known of one another's work.⁴ Favier had danced at the Opéra under Beauchamp's direction, and we know from their own statements that both Beauchamp and Lorin had shown their notations or notations-in-progress to others in their field. All was not collegial exchange, however: Lorin, in his contredanse manuscript of c.1685,⁵ writes petulantly, 'I do not doubt that this [present work] will be subject to the criticism of some persons who esteem only those things of which they are the au-

thors.'⁶ Opinion appears to have been divided about whether to notate the steps along the path of the dance—as in Beauchamp's system as published by Feuillet—or to keep the two separate. After trying the former solution and being criticized for it, Lorin chose the latter.

Some two decades later, controversy between Beauchamp and Lorin erupted into public view. In 1704 Beauchamp filed a complaint with the king in his council against both Lorin, who earlier that year had obtained a privilege to publish notated dances of all sorts, and Feuillet, who had been publishing notated dances since 1700. Beauchamp alleged that Feuillet and Lorin had been wrongfully granted permission to print and sell notated dances, depriving him of profits and of the glory that should rightfully be his as the inventor of dance notation.⁷ Lorin countersued for double what Beauchamp was asking, claiming defamation of character; Feuillet also countersued, but for a very modest amount. Beauchamp's lawsuit is described in detail elsewhere.⁸ The outcome basically maintained the *status quo*: Beauchamp was acknowledged as the inventor of the system Feuillet had published; Lorin's system was declared different from Beauchamp's; and Feuillet and Lorin both retained their publishing privileges. But from our point of view the proceeding was very worth while, since records of the case have provided us with much useful information.

One of the pieces of evidence in the Beauchamp proceedings was a 'placard de 1689 d'une danse décrite par le Sr Delahaise'. Following this clue, Harris-Warrick and Marsh discovered that in 1686 De la Haise was granted a privilege 'to publish a book entitled *L'art de danser*, which was described as

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Les Cloches. Ou Le Carillon.

À la 3. mesure de l'air les Cavaliers 2. et 1. partent du pied gauche et les Dames 3. et 1. du pied droit pour faire chacun un pas de bonitee en arriere en dequissant la main gauche. Le Cavalier et la Dame 2. font un demy tour en dehors et le Cavalier et la Dame 1. font la meme chose en dedans. À la 6. et 7. mesure ils font deux pas de bonitee en suivant leurs figures et la 8. un couppe assemble. Et de ceste maniere le Cavalier et la Dame 3. estant descendus occupent la place du Cavalier et de la Dame 1. qui ont monte pour dancier avec le Cavalier et la Dame 2. apres quoy le Cavalier 3. fait un petit saut en se tournant deuant la Dame 2. qui saute aussi dans le meme temps et le Cavalier 4. fait un petit saut en se tournant vers la Dame 1. qui saute aussi deuant luy.

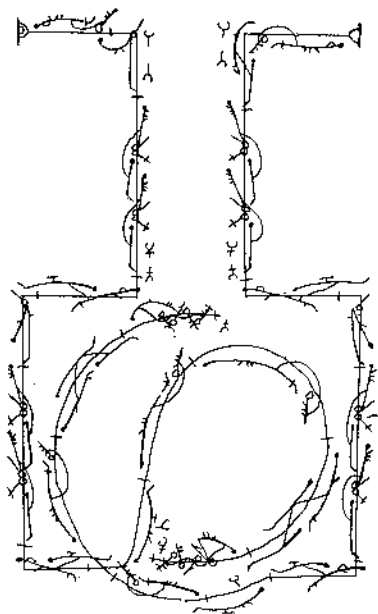
The diagram shows a dance floor with four couples of dancers. The couples are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4. The dancers are represented by silhouettes. The floor is divided into four quadrants by a horizontal and a vertical line. The couples are positioned in each quadrant. The numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed near each couple. Above the floor, there is a musical staff with notes and rests. Below the floor, there are small diagrams of a couple dancing, with arrows indicating their movement. The text above the floor describes the steps of the dance.

Le Cavalier et la Dame 2. qui ont reste à la queue. p. note qu'ils n'avoient pas leur nombre pendant que les Cavaliers et les Dames 1. et 3. ont dancé ensemble et se preparent à monter pour aller à leur place.

Le Cavalier et la Dame 4. qui n'ont rien fait à la teste pendant que les Cavaliers et les Dames 1. et 3. ont dancé ensemble commencent à faire dancier les Cavaliers et les Dames suivant les demanstrations qui suivent.

Four small diagrams, numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4, showing the steps of the dance for each couple. Each diagram includes a small musical staff with notes and rests, and a small diagram of a couple dancing. The diagrams are arranged in a row.

1 André Lorin, *Livre de la contredance du Roy* (1688—Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. fr. 1698), p.89



2 Beauchamp-Feuillet notation—the third figure of 'La Mariée' by Pécour, from Raoul-Auger Feuillet, *Recueil de dances composées par M. Pecour* (Paris, 1700)

"a new method of learning dance invented by him", and also granted the right to publish plates of dances for fifteen years'.⁹

Leaving De la Haise aside for lack of further information, let us take a closer look at the dance notation systems of Beauchamp, Lorin and Favier. I offer here a comparison of these three systems, examining some of the ways in which their inventors might have thought about dance and about the problems they had to solve in order to record it. I also discuss differences between theory and practice in each of the systems, and ways in which both theory and practice may have changed over time.

Brief descriptions of notation systems and sources

Sources for learning about notation systems fall into three main categories—theoretical descriptions,

practical applications (that is, notated dances) and peripheral references or examples.

Beauchamp

Theoretical descriptions Beauchamp's notation system was described by Feuillet in his *Chorégraphie* (1700, 2/1701); in the next few years this work was translated into English by both Weaver and Siris, and into German by Taubert.¹⁰ Later authors closely followed Feuillet, sometimes quoting him verbatim.¹¹

Because Beauchamp's system was filtered through Feuillet's published description I shall follow accepted practice and refer to it as the Beauchamp-Feuillet system. We do not as yet have a good way of knowing what contribution, if any, Feuillet made to the development of the system.

Notations Over 335 dances notated in the Beauchamp-Feuillet system have survived to the present.¹² Some are known only in manuscript form; others were published, whether singly, as part of a collection of published dances, or in conjunction with another work. The majority of these extant dances date from the first third of the 18th century. Among them are dances for the stage, and for public or private balls or dancing assemblies. Roughly 77 are solos and 23 are same-sex duos, with most of the remainder for a mixed couple. (See illus.2 for a sample of Beauchamp-Feuillet notation.)

Peripheral references Dance treatises such as those of Dufort (1728) and Tomlinson (1735) provide notations for many of the dance steps they describe,¹³ allowing us to correlate verbal descriptions with notated representations of the steps. Pierre Rameau's proposed modifications to the Beauchamp-Feuillet system implicitly provide information about it.¹⁴

Summary of the system In the Beauchamp-Feuillet system the page of notation represents the dancing space viewed from above, with the front of the space at the top of the page. The path of each dancer is shown schematically, with symbols for steps placed along the path. The path may be extended or displaced in arbitrary directions to accommodate another dancer's path, another part of the same

dancer's path, or symbols for steps that do not travel horizontally; neither the path nor the steps are shown to scale.

Each step symbol shows—again, schematically and not to scale—the horizontal path that the foot takes in executing the step, modified in various ways to show actions, such as jumping or pirouetting, that result in vertical displacement or rotation of the foot or body. These symbols can also show the way the foot is moved or placed on the floor, e.g. by sliding or by stamping.

Short perpendicular lines on each dancer's path indicate bars of music, corresponding to the tune shown at the top of the page. The step symbols are distributed along the path in relation to these marks, to indicate when in relation to the music each step is to occur.

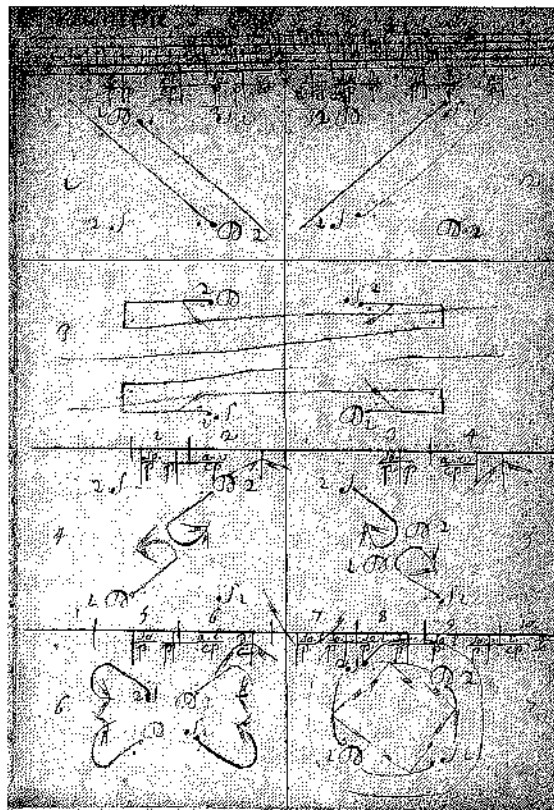
Lorin

Theoretical descriptions Lorin provides a theoretical description of his system in the introduction to his manuscript *Livre de contredanse*, described in the next paragraph.¹⁵

Notations Two manuscripts by Lorin have survived: *Livre de contredance présenté au Roy*, a collection of 13 English contredanses notated using Lorin's system, dating from 1685 or shortly thereafter, and *Livre de contredance du Roy*, a detailed study of the first of these, notated and elaborately illustrated, dated 1688, with a new dedication and dedicatory poems, dated 1721.¹⁶ (See illus.3 for a sample of Lorin notation.)

Peripheral references The records of Beauchamp's lawsuit provide information about Lorin and his notation system, as viewed by himself and by others. In Goussier's article 'Chorégraphie' in Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* there is a passing reference to a notation system that seems much like Lorin's.

Summary of the system In the Lorin system the page is divided into smaller rectangles, each representing the dancing space viewed from above, with the front of the space toward the top of the page as

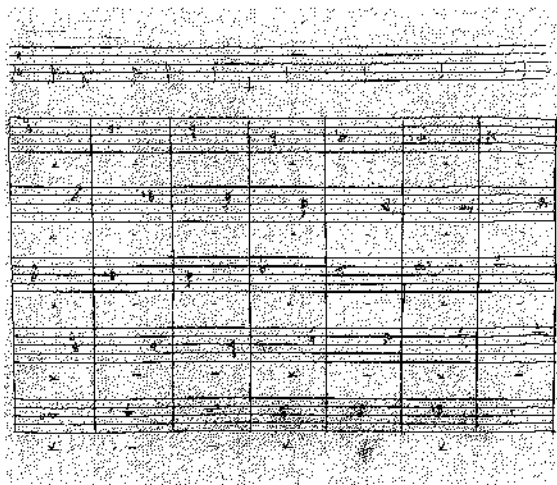


3 Lorin notation—the second page of 'Valentine's Day: Le Jour de Saint Valentin', from André Lorin, *Livre de contredance présenté au Roy* (c.1685) (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. 1697)

in the Beauchamp-Feuillet system. The dancers' starting positions and paths (figures) are indicated within each rectangle. The tune for the dance, with the bars numbered, appears across the top of the page; sometimes a second strain is placed in the middle of the page. Symbols for steps are placed either directly beneath the music, within the appropriate bar, or along the tops of the rectangles, with the steps barred and numbered to correspond to the tune's bar numbers. Additional numbers below some of the step symbols and in each rectangle are keyed to one another, to indicate which steps are to be done for each figure.

Favier

Theoretical description The only theoretical description, based on a lost manuscript by Favier



4 Favier notation—from the first page of the Rigaudon from *Le mariage de la Grosse Cathos* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Rés. F. 534b, p.83)

(date uncertain), appears in Goussier's *Encyclopédie* article.¹⁷

Notation The only known notation using the Favier system is a manuscript of dances for *Le mariage de la Grosse Cathos*, dating from 1688, the year the work was performed. There are ten notated dances for this comic masquerade, comprising one dance for nine, four dances for eight, one dance for five, one dance for two couples, two male duos and one female duo.¹⁸ (See illus.4 for a sample of Favier notation.)

Peripheral references Peripheral references are notable by their absence. In particular, there is no mention of Favier or his notation system in the records of Beauchamp's lawsuit.

Summary of the system In the Favier system each dancer's part is represented on what looks like a musical staff, divided into rectangles by what appear to be bar lines. The analogy with music notation can be extended further: as in an orchestral score, parts for many dancers can be represented on the same page. Unlike bars of music, however, the rectangles do not represent uniform lengths of time: each rectangle lines up with a part of the tune above it—sometimes only a note or two, sometimes more—

and corresponds to the time taken by that portion of the music.

Each rectangle represents the dancing space as viewed from above. The dancer's location, body direction and foot position at the given moment are shown, along with an indication of which way (if at all) the dancer had to turn to arrive at the current body direction.

Symbols placed below the staff indicate vertical movements, such as bending or jumping, and approximately when they occur during the dancer's horizontal movement. When both legs move, these symbols show which leg moves first or whether they both move at the same time. Some other movements such as *ronds de jambe* or pirouettes can also be indicated.

The scope and intent of each system

Before comparing these three systems, let us consider what each was meant to be used for, and what it was in fact used for, at least in so far as we have evidence.

In his petition to the king in his council, Beauchamp says that he struggled to invent a system that could be used to record dances and ballets danced at court and at the Opéra, so that they could be learned without the need for personal teaching. Feuillet's title-page for *Chorégraphie* states a similar intention, though geared more toward the public: that by means of notation 'any person, who understands dancing, may of himself easily learn all manner of dances' (Weaver's translation). In practice Beauchamp-Feuillet notation was widely used—there are extant dance notations from France, England, Germany, Spain, and Portugal¹⁹—to record and transmit ballroom and theatre dances, in France and beyond, to dance professionals and their students both in and out of court.

Lorin's intended audience and purpose are initially quite specific. His extant manuscripts are meant to transmit one type of dance, English country dance, to a limited audience, the king and court. But already by 1688 he had grander aspirations: in the manuscript he presented to the king he writes, in classic funding-application language, that he intends to expand his 'universal invention' to encompass all sorts of dance tunes and numbers of persons, along

with a listing of all the steps that can be done to different kinds of dance by all sorts of dancers. Among the items placed in evidence at the Beauchamp proceeding were five collections of *dances* and *contredanses* made by Lorin (my emphasis), so it appears that by 1704 he had in fact expanded his repertory.

Favier sought to devise a system that could be used for all types of dance. He seems to have been particularly aware of the need to account for the range of possibilities in theatre dance: Goussier, apparently using Favier's words, defines the problem: '... it is necessary to record all the movements that could be done in an *entrée de ballet* made up of several dancers, whether it be of *belle danse* or of posture, as are the *entrées* for gladiators, seers, or harlequin, and whether the movements are the same or different, whether some of the dancers remain in the same place while the others move forward.' And Favier's system did in fact serve well to record group theatre dances from *Le mariage de la Grosse Cathos*. It is not known whether it was used for any other dances.

Common approaches

There are obvious differences among these three notation systems, but also underlying similarities, no doubt due to commonly held assumptions about the nature of dance. Whether or not they actually exchanged views on the problem of recording dances, Beauchamp, Lorin and Favier were products of approximately the same culture and dance training. It is not surprising that their notation systems emphasize roughly the same components of dance—steps, figure and music. (It should go without saying that dance need not include any of these components.) The predominance of these three aspects of the dance is especially striking in the notations themselves, as opposed to the theoretical descriptions.

Steps All three notation systems provide ways to show what the feet and legs are doing—what the steps are. Beauchamp and Favier both provide ways to show foot positions, movement from one position to another, bending and straightening the legs, springing, turning and so on. Lorin takes a short cut, simply giving abbreviations for names of steps that

the dancer is expected to know. All three show which foot (or feet) are to execute the step.

All three also use, to some extent at least, a 'modular' approach to notating steps. That is, elemental symbols can be recombined with relative ease. Even Lorin's system, which at first glance offers a fixed system with a small finite set of possible steps, makes good use of this modular approach, using symbols for turning, leaving the foot in the air, executing or finishing the step facing the other dancer or dancers (*en présence*), finishing with the feet together (*assemblée*) and so on, to modify generic step symbols.

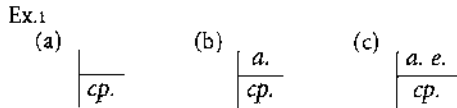
Figure All these systems employ a 'bird's-eye view' approach, showing the figure of the dance by treating the notation as a schematic map, or series of maps, of the dancing area as viewed from above.²⁰ We might contrast this figure-based approach with the step-based system used by Arbeau a century before.²¹ Arbeau shows very clearly the relationship of steps to music, but in only a couple of cases—the *Branle de la Haye* and *Les Bouffons*—does he illustrate the spatial pattern of the dance.

Music In each notation system, the tune for the dance is shown, and step symbols are placed so as to show how they relate to the music. Favier's system is capable of the most accuracy in this respect, but all three systems are accurate at least to the level of the musical bar. Both Beauchamp and Favier follow the convention that a preparatory bend at the beginning of a step is shown as taking no time (for example, from the preceding bar),²² and in a sense Lorin follows this convention as well: he shows steps as beginning on the beat, rather than just before it.

Differences

Let us now consider some of the differences between the systems, using the same three categories—steps, figure and music.

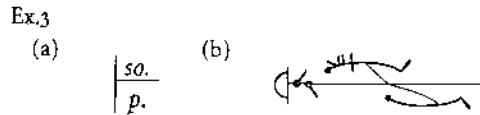
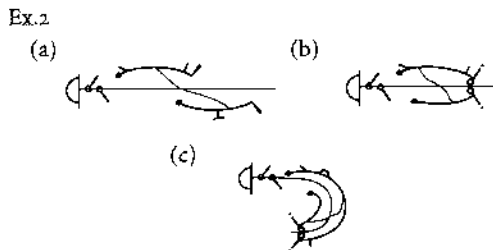
Steps One evident difference between Lorin's system and the other two is the number of possible steps. Lorin, in focusing on *contredanses*, had to deal with a much smaller vocabulary of steps than Beauchamp or Favier. And because he expected a fairly homogeneous audience, at least for his surviving



manuscripts, he could assume prior knowledge of the steps themselves and merely indicate them rather than showing all their component parts.

As indicated above, all three systems use a 'modular' approach to show different steps. But there are conceptual differences in the ways the modules are constructed and combined. As Guilcher points out,²³ symbols in Lorin's system—abbreviated step names—serve to evoke global step categories; as modifiers are added, the category is redefined until the desired step is obtained. For example, *coupé* (shown as ex.1a) can be changed to *coupé assemblé* (ex.1b) or *coupé assemblé en présence* (ex.1c). Modifications such as this can also occur in Beauchamp's system: *coupé* (ex.2a) or *coupé assemblé* (ex.2b) becomes *coupé* with change of direction (ex.2c). But the steps being thus modified are built of more elemental components: each bend, rise, weight shift, turn, etc. is indicated, and it is the combination of these elements in the proper arrangement that makes up the symbol for a given step. If there is a global approach in the Beauchamp system, it is in the tables of steps that Feuillet and his translators published, which, they claim, show all or almost all of the steps used in dancing.²⁴

In Favier's system, the approach is strictly local. Elements such as 'bend' and 'spring' can be combined (in conjunction with the foot position symbol) to make a symbol for 'hop' (ex.4b, first rectangle), but as far as the notation is concerned this hop cannot be further combined with a step to form a *pas sauté*, as in Lorin's system (ex.3a), or with two steps to form a *contretemp*, as in Beauchamp's

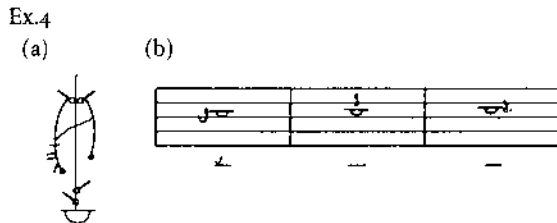


(ex.3b).²⁵ There is no Favier-system equivalent to the tie-lines that the Beauchamp system uses to indicate that certain elements should be grouped and thought of as a unit; nor is there any indication of step names, as in Lorin's system.

There is another basic difference between Beauchamp's and Favier's systems: whereas in Beauchamp's system horizontal foot movement can be represented as a continuous path; Favier's system shows only a series of positions, from which the path of the foot must be interpolated. Thus, in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation a *contretemp assemblé* appears as in ex.4a; the equivalent in Favier notation is as in ex.4b.

Figure We also find the distinction between position and path in the way the three notation systems represent the dance figures. In his 1685 manuscript Lorin shows each figure with a continuous path for each dancer. In the 1688 manuscript Lorin adopts a more 'freeze-frame' approach, taking great pains to illustrate where the dancers should be at each of 81 moments in the dance, though he also shows the paths the dancers follow (see illus.1).

Lorin in a sense outdoes both Beauchamp and Favier, who take a more schematic approach. Beauchamp's system shows the figure approximately, but, as noted above, it is generally not to scale, and it may be modified because of steps that do not travel, other dancers' paths, paths that retrace themselves, and, almost certainly, the skill and inclination of the notator in deciding how to fit everything neatly on the page. Favier's system, on the other hand, shows no



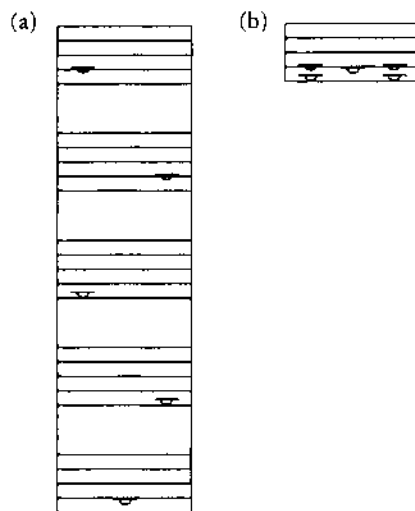
paths, only position, each dancer's movement in the dancing space is represented by a series of schematic top-down views, from which the path is interpolated. Since each dancer is represented on a separate staff, there is no danger of confusion about which path is whose (as there sometimes is upon casual reading in the Beauchamp system). But neither is there ever a composite image showing the placement of all the dancers on the stage; such an image for any given moment must be synthesized from the 'frames' for the individual dancers (ex.5).

Music The differences here relate to differences in the ways steps are represented. Favier's system can in theory show any level of rhythmic detail, although, as mentioned above, he apparently chose not to assign any time-value to preparatory bends before rises or springs. Beauchamp's system can clearly specify which beat a step-unit is to begin on, and can often indicate the rhythmic pattern within the step-unit, but some ambiguity remains. Evidently this proved problematic in the 18th century, as it sometimes does today: there were several attempts to explain and improve the manner in which step-rhythms were represented in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation. Lorin's system can indicate on which beat a step is to begin, but relies on the dancer's prior knowledge of rhythms within step units.

Theory versus practice; changes within the systems Beauchamp, Lorin, Favier and the others who worked to develop dance notation actually had two problems to solve—creating a notation system, and using it to record dances in such a way that they could be learned or relearned from notation. Feuillet alluded to the double nature of this problem, writing in his preface to *Chorégraphie* that it would not have been enough just to give an explanation of the notation system without also providing concrete examples to show how it is used. Practical examples provide a test of the theory behind the system, and may offer feedback that suggests changes or additions, so that the system can adapt over time. In some cases conventional usage may supplant usage suggested by theory.

Next I shall look at some of the disparities between theory and practice in each of the three nota-

Ex.5 Favier's representation of position: (a) the position of dancers as shown at the start of the Rigaudon, on separate staves; (b) a (hypothetical) composite, showing all five dancers on one staff

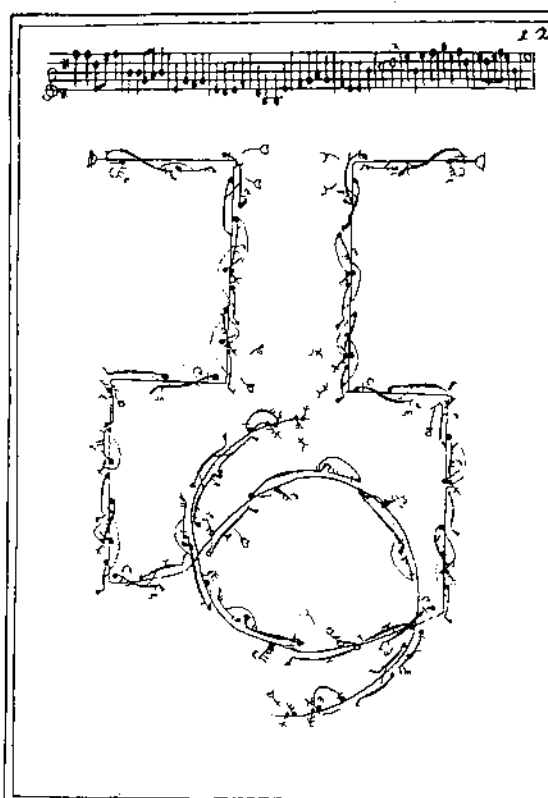


tion systems under discussion, and at ways these systems may have changed as a result of practical experience.

Beauchamp-Feuillet

Consider the tantalizing question of what Beauchamp's system was like, both in theory and in practice, before Feuillet's publication of *Chorégraphie*. In his 1704 petition to the king in his council, Beauchamp says that he had 'applied himself to forming and arranging symbols and notes in tabulated form to show the steps of dances and ballets'. The phrase 'tabulated form' ('en forme de tablature') does not apply easily to dances in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation. It may refer to something like the tables of steps in *Chorégraphie*, or it may indicate a system more like Lorin's or that of the German dancing-master Johannes Pasch.²⁶ It is possible that Beauchamp felt justified in his complaint against Lorin because Lorin's system resembled a preliminary version of Beauchamp's. But regardless of what Beauchamp's earlier versions looked like, he must ultimately have arrived at a system close to that in *Chorégraphie*, which the king's council referred to as the system 'invented by the said Beauchamp and published through the labour of the said Feuillet'.

de Rollant



5 Rameau's modification of Beauchamp-Feuillet notation—the third figure of 'La Mariée de Rollant', from Pierre Rameau, *Abbrégé de la nouvelle méthode* (Paris, 1725) (compare illus.2)

Feuillet's publications offer an excellent opportunity to consider the disparities between theory and practice in the Beauchamp-Feuillet system. In *Chorégraphie*, Feuillet provided tables of steps which he said showed notation for 'most of the steps used in dance'. But even the ballroom dances he published that same year included steps not found in his step tables. In the 1701 edition of *Chorégraphie* he published a four-page supplement to the tables, which showed some, but not all, the steps he had omitted from the 1700 table, including some fairly basic ones, such as the minuet step.²⁷ On the other hand, some of the theory in Feuillet's treatise, such as his system for notating arm movements, or the use of dots as modifiers for jumps or slides,²⁸ seem rarely to have been used.

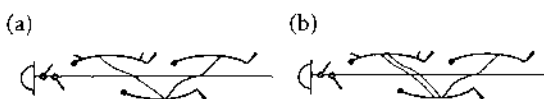
One recurring problem in the Beauchamp-Feuillet system was the representation of internal rhythms in composite steps. Feuillet touches on this in *Chorégraphie*,²⁹ briefly indicating how to use double liaison lines to indicate that two or more elements of a composite step occur within the same beat of the music (ex.6). But he does not fully explicate the use of liaison lines (double, single, or detached) to indicate timing until his 'Traité de la cadence' in the introductory material to his 1704 *Recueil de dances*.³⁰ And the notated dances in that *Recueil* do not always incorporate the rules he sets out: for example, *pas de bourrée* in duple or compound metre are notated without the double tie line that theory would require.³¹

The Beauchamp-Feuillet system proved quite robust, adaptable to the styles of different choreographers and notators over the course of the 18th century. There is insufficient space here to consider all the variations in this system over the years, but I shall discuss two fairly major modifications, one by Pierre Rameau and the other apparently by Feuillet himself.

Rameau's changes In his *Abbrégé de la nouvelle méthode* (1725) Rameau published an annotated table of suggested additions and modifications to Feuillet's step tables, along with 12 dances using his redesigned system. Although he seems to have been cursed with a dull engraving tool, Rameau proved himself an acute theoretician, proposing solutions to several of the problems that he found with standard Beauchamp-Feuillet notation (illus.5).

Three of Rameau's modifications had to do with more accurate ways to represent the timing of steps or the timing within steps. As alluded to above, in standard Beauchamp-Feuillet notation a preparatory bend is notated after, rather than just before, the beginning of the bar. (This is a convention that makes the notation easier to write and read, without

Ex.6 (a) *Pas de bourrée* with a single liaison line; (b) *pas de bourrée* with double liaison line joining the first two steps



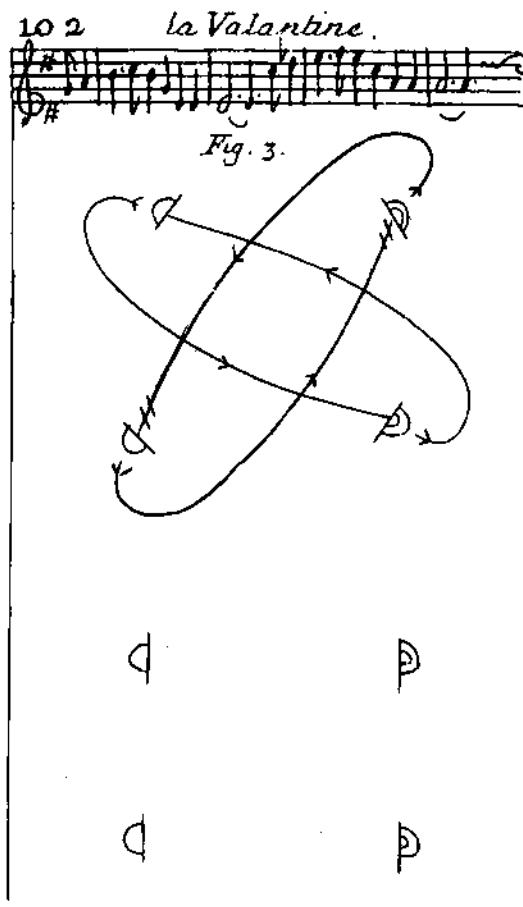
causing any real confusion.)³² Rameau's revision eliminates bar marks along the path of the dance, and uses instead a small *m* adjacent to the step symbol to indicate more precisely the part of the step (a rise or spring, generally) that occurs on the down-beat of the bar (*mesure*). To indicate the internal rhythm of the step, Rameau alters the 'heads' of the step symbols to indicate note values: a white step head takes a minim, a black one a crotchet, and a hooked one a quaver, with dots augmenting the time by half as in musical notation.³³ Finally, for a turning step Rameau detaches the turn symbol so it can be placed adjacent to the step symbol, showing more clearly *when* the turn is to occur—before, during, or after the step.³⁴

Feuillet's changes The other modification of the Beauchamp-Feuillet system was a simplification and adaptation for notating contredanses and other group dances, introduced by Feuillet in his 1706 *Recueil de contredances* (illus.6),³⁵ and subsequently used by Essex, Pemberton and Dezais among others.³⁶ Feuillet introduced new symbols for some of the hand motions in the contredanses, such as 'make sign with the finger three times as to bid one come' (Essex's translation). More significantly, he completely eliminated most of the step symbols from the notations, having outlined rules for 'default' steps in the introductory material;³⁷ only non-travelling steps (jumps in place, *balancés* and *pas de rigaudon*), and hand and arm motions, were notated. To indicate that steps or hand and arm motions did not travel, he notated them along a dotted line rather than the solid line reserved for the actual figure of the dance.

Lorin

It is fascinating to see, and read, that Lorin changed his mind about his notation system after recording the first dance of his c.1685 manuscript. In the introduction, he attempts to fend off criticism for not marking the steps along the figure of the dance. He says that it had been his intention to do so, and that he had even begun, when several 'dance-enlightened' persons came to visit.

These gentlemen admired the easy method by which I gave



6 Feuillet's contredanse notation—the third figure of 'La Valantine', from Raoul-Auger Feuillet, *Recueil de contredances* (Paris, 1706) (compare illus.3, first and second rectangles)

the information. Nevertheless they judged it more appropriate to place the steps under the tune, saying that that were sufficient to give complete instructions, and that if I marked the steps with the figures I would render the thing inconvenient by the confusion there would be of turning the page to see them right side up, and would deprive the figure of all its grace. (My translation.)

It is tempting to imagine that this passage describes the moment when Lorin's system diverged from Beauchamp's.

Lorin slightly changed his system again in his 1688 manuscript, perhaps to aid royal comprehension. Besides providing elaborate illustrations of the dancers on the dance floor, he partially

expanded his step name abbreviations; for example, $\frac{b.}{p.}$ becomes $\frac{bour.}{pas.}$ (for *pas de bourrée*—see *illus.1*).

There is an intriguing mention of what seems to be Lorin's system in Goussier's article. Goussier quotes Favier's reference to other notation systems: 'Others have added ciphers [initials] to this letter-based invention, and give as a mark to each step the first letter of its name, for example a B for the *pas de bourrée*, an M for the menuet step, a G for the *pas de gaillarde* etc.'³⁸ This system sounds like Lorin's—except that neither of Lorin's extant manuscripts mentions a *pas de gaillarde*, nor does it seem likely that there would be one in a contredanse.³⁹ There are several possible explanations for the discrepancy. (1) The reference is not to Lorin's system at all. (2) Favier was referring to an earlier version of Lorin's system, which did include a symbol for the *pas de gaillarde*. (Lorin had no need of this symbol in his c.1685 contredanse manuscript.) (3) Favier was speaking about an augmented version of Lorin's system, perhaps the one Lorin proposed in 1688, developed thereafter, and sought to publish in 1704. Presumably this version would have been represented among the five volumes of Lorin's notations placed in evidence at the Beauchamp proceeding. (4) Favier was merely making a casual reference, describing the basis of Lorin's system without being concerned about whether Lorin actually used the letter *g* for anything. (Lorin himself seems to have been fairly casual in describing his system. The list of step symbols in the 'theory' section of his 1685 manuscript is by no means exhaustive.)

Favier

In the Favier system there is a substantial difference between theory, as outlined by Goussier, and practice, as seen in the 1688 manuscript notation for the *Cathos* dances. Just as Feuillet gives symbols for steps that are used infrequently or not at all in extant notations, Favier's theory allows for many more possibilities and subtleties of notation than are actually present in the *Cathos* manuscript. For example, he also provides symbols for the following, none of which is used in the *Cathos* dances. For each, the foot can be shown as turned out or turned in; Feuillet gives symbols for all but the last two:

- placing the ball of the foot on the ground, then the heel
- placing the ball of the foot on the ground without lowering the heel
- placing the heel on the ground, and then the ball of the foot
- placing the heel on the ground, without lowering the ball of the foot
- placing the heel and the ball of the foot on the ground at the same time
- holding the foot in the air with the ball of the foot high
- holding the foot in the air with the foot parallel to the ground

Like Feuillet in 1706, Favier proposes using a dotted line to indicate a movement that does not travel. He also gives several symbols to indicate bending the body forward, backward, or to the left or right. And, like Rameau, he presents a system for indicating timing with symbols modified like music notes. None of these symbols appears in the *Cathos* manuscript either.

This disparity between theory and practice leaves us wondering why Favier changed his mind, and when. Did he develop his theory and then realize that it was impractical? Or did he test an early version of his system by notating the *Cathos* dances, and then develop it further, perhaps feeling that it had allowed him insufficient precision or variety? Did he attempt to add 'features' to his system in the hope of making it more competitive with Beauchamp's (or with Feuillet's, depending on the date)?

Harris-Warrick and Marsh argue that in Favier's case, theory—notably his system of representing timings with note-like symbols—must have come first and been rejected as impractical, and they conclude that Favier's theoretical manuscript was written before 1688. But Favier's proposed method of representing timing would have been very useful in conjunction with, rather than as a replacement for, the one actually used in *Cathos*; it would have given at a glance a way to group elemental movements into composite steps. Goussier's article says nothing to discount the possibility that Favier intended such redundancy. In any case, Rameau provides an example of an awkward theoretical proposal coming after a practical system was in place. I do not believe we yet have enough information in Favier's case to determine whether theory or practice came first.

Conclusion

Of the three notation systems we have considered, Beauchamp-Feuillet is the only one that gained and retained popularity in the 18th century. Though Lorin's system was fine for contredanses, and Favier's method served very well to record the dances from *Cathos*, these two systems were never widely used. But the Beauchamp-Feuillet system, though it had its detractors, continued in use throughout the century. Even as late as 1805 the dancing-master Francis Peacock wrote in its defence, citing the 'Loure' (*Aimable vainqueur*, presumably) and Isaac's *Rigaudon* as worthy of study.⁴⁰

By looking at the three systems together, we can get a better sense of how their inventors thought

about dance. All three systems provide ways to represent steps, figure and music in the dance; clearly these elements are important to the structure of late 17th-century dance. But these were not the only elements involved. It is useful to learn, from Favier's theoretical ideas, that bending the body was part of his dance vocabulary; or, from Favier and Feuillet, that it could be important to distinguish how the foot was held or placed on the floor, even if we do not often see such distinction in extant notations.

We have seen that all three systems underwent change in the process of development. It is clear that we must view dance notation systems as somewhat provisional, and pay attention to ways in which the interaction between theory and practice can affect both.

I am deeply grateful to Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Carol Marsh for having invited me to share in their early investigations of Favier notation, and for their continued help and support. I am grateful also to Julia Sutton for information about the Lorin manuscripts; to Michael Rogan and the Bakalar Library at the Longy School of Music and to Lowell Lindgren, for help with hard-to-find sources; and above all to Jennifer Thorp, for tactful and generous advice and encouragement throughout the preparation of this article.

1 For further information about Pierre Beauchamp, see R. Kunzle, 'The illustrious unknown choreographer, Pierre Beauchamp', *Dance scope*, viii/2 (1974), pp.32-42, and ix/1 (1975), pp.30-45; R. Astier, 'Pierre Beauchamps and the ballets de collège', *Dance chronicle*, vi (1983), pp. 138-63; and the works cited in n.8 below.

2 This dance is described in the score as being for a group of male and female Egyptians, a group of male and female Ethiopians, and a group of male and female Indians. It is unclear whether Beauchamp's notated dance was for this casting. There are three extant

choreographies to this music, two by Pécour (one for solo male, one for solo female) and one anonymous (for solo male).

3 See R. Harris-Warrick and C. G. Marsh, *Musical theatre at the court of Louis XIV* (Cambridge, 1994), p.86.

4 Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical theatre at the court of Louis XIV*, p.87.

5 See n.16 below.

6 Lorin seems to have been especially aware of the potential for criticism. In his manuscript of 1688 he wrote 'Mais quoique les nouveautés plaisent toujours, elles sont souvent dangereuses pour ceux qui les inventent quelques soins qu'ils prennent pour les embellir parce qu'elles ne manquent jamais de censeurs. La justice qu'on pourra [sic] me rendre sera d'avouer que l'application extraordinaire que j'ay donnée a cet ouvrage ne sera point inutile aux amateurs de la dance, et je supplie [sic] ceux qui excellent dans cette profession de me faire le plaisir de m'avertir des défauts qu'ils y auront pû remarquer, parce que j'ay toujours eu beaucoup de déférence pour les sentimens des gens habilles, et de soumission pour leurs lumieres.'

7 It is unclear why Beauchamp had not complained immediately about Feuillet's 1700 publication. It may simply have been 'unaccountable negligence', as P[eter?] Siris put it in his dedication for *The Art of Dancing* (London, 1706), but there may also have been personal or political factors. Feuillet evidently had powerful protectors: he dedicated the *Chorégraphie* to Pécour, Beauchamp's successor at the Opéra, and his 1704 *Recueil* of theatre dances (by Pécour) was dedicated to the king's brother. For his part Pécour, in his dedication to the king of Michel Gaudrau's collection of his dances, *Nouveau recueil de dance de bal et celle de ballet ... de la composition de Mr. Pecour* (Paris, [1713]), seems purposely to avoid mentioning Beauchamp by name, referring to him only as 'a famous [dancing-] master'; this despite the fact that Gaudrau, in his preface, states clearly that it is to Beauchamp that we owe the invention of dance notation.

In 1687 Beauchamp had taken the preliminary step of obtaining letters from the chancellery granting him a privilege to publish printed dances, but the letters were never signed or sealed. We may speculate that this was due to a shake-up at the Opéra following

Lully's death and Beauchamp's replacement by Pécour as *maitre des ballets*.

8 P. J. S. Richardson, 'The Beauchamp mystery: some fresh light on an old problem', *Dancing times*, cdxviii (March 1947), pp.299–302; cdxviii (April 1947), pp.351–7; F. Derra de Moroda, 'Chorégraphie: the dance notation of the eighteenth century: Beauchamp or Feuillet?', *The book collector*, xvi/4 (1967), pp.450–76; J.-M. Guilcher, 'André Lorin et l'invention de l'écriture chorégraphique', *Revue d'histoire du théâtre*, xxi (1969), pp.256–64; Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical theatre at the court of Louis XIV*, pp.83–7.

9 See Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical theatre at the court of Louis XIV*, p.86. De la Haise's may or may not have been one of three other notation systems mentioned by Favier in his theoretical treatise. If De la Haise's was distinct from this unnamed system, then there were not four but five (or more) notation systems under development during this period.

10 Raoul-Auger Feuillet, *Chorégraphie, ou L'art de décrire la danse ...* (Paris, 1700; R/New York, 1968; 2/1701; R/Bologna, 1970); John Weaver, *Orchesography* (London, 1706; R/Farnborough, 1971); Siris, *The Art of Dancing*; Gottfried Taubert, *Rechtschaffener Tantzmeister* (Leipzig, 1717; R/Munich, 1976).

11 For a discussion of these sources, see the entry for *Chorégraphie* in J. L. Schwartz and C. L. Schlundt, *French court dance and dance music: a guide to primary source writings, 1643–1789* (Stuyvesant, NY, 1987). For further background on Beauchamp-Feuillet notation and its influence, see W. Hilton, *Dance of court and theater* (Princeton, 1981; 2/1997).

12 See M. E. Little and C. G. Marsh, *La danse noble: an inventory of dances and sources* (Williamstown, MA, 1992); F. Lancelot, *La belle danse: catalogue raisonnée fait en l'an 1995* (Paris, 1996); M. Goff and J. Thorp, 'Dance notations published in England c.1700–1740 and related manuscript material', *Dance research*, ix/2 (1991), pp.32–50.

13 Giambatista Dufort, *Trattato del ballo nobile* (Naples, 1728; R/Farnborough, 1972); Kellom Tomlinson, *The Art of Dancing* (London, 1735; R/Farnborough, 1970).

14 Pierre Rameau, *Abbrégé de la nouvelle methode* (Paris, c.1725; R/Farnborough, 1972).

15 A translation of this material, along with a facsimile of the first dance, *Christ Church Bells*, is provided in G. Plant, 'Book of the contredanses presented to the king by André Lorin, His Majesty's Professor of Dancing', *Historical dance*, ii/2 (1982), pp.3–13.

16 André Lorin, *Livre de contredance présenté au Roy* (c.1685), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. fr. 1697; see facsimile, with notes by J. Sutton (Pendragon Press, forthcoming). André Lorin, *Livre de la contredance du Roy* (1688), Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. fr. 1698. Lorin was apparently not averse to recycling: he managed to reacquire the 1688 manuscript, so that in 1721 he could present it once more, this time to Louis XV rather than XIV, with additional contredance notations, only the dedicatory poems to which have survived.

See Guilcher, 'André Lorin et l'invention de l'écriture chorégraphique'; L. and J. Pilling, 'The rehabilitation of André Lorin', *Dolmetsch Historical Dance Society journal*, ix (1979), pp.21–5; Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical theatre at the court of Louis XIV*, p.85.

17 Louis-Jacques Goussier, 'Chorégraphie', *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean d'Alembert, iii (Paris, 1753), esp. pp.371–3; vol. 3 of the plates (Paris, 1762); reprint in Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical theatre at the court of Louis XIV*, pp.320–29, where this material is thoroughly discussed (see esp. pp.87–92).

18 A facsimile of these dance notations, as well as a detailed discussion and analysis of the dances and their historical context is included in Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical theatre at the court of Louis XIV*.

19 Little and Marsh, *La danse noble*, p.87.

20 The bird's-eye approach had been used previously, for example by Fabrizio Caroso (*Nobiltà di dame* (Venice, 1600), trans. J. Sutton (Oxford, 1986)) in the figure for his 'Contrapasso nuovo', or by dancing-masters recording the arrangement of dancers, or indeed of horses, in ballets of the early 17th century. John Playford, in *The English Dancing Master* (London, 1651, and many subsequent editions) indicated the starting arrangement of each dance with a schematic bird's-eye diagram. Later in the century Claude-François Ménéstrier also employed a bird's-eye approach to illustrate dance figures in *Des ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre* (Paris, 1682).

21 Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographie* (Langres, 1589; R/Geneva, 1972), trans. M. S. Evans, ed. J. Sutton (New York, 1967). Feuillet, in his preface to *Chorégraphie*, cites Arbeau's *Orchesographie* (which, he says, can no longer be found), and goes on to say that Arbeau was the first or maybe the only one to record and represent the dance steps of his day in the same manner as one notes music. Feuillet goes on, 'thus we are obliged to this author for having given us the first ideas of how to notate dance'. Though Weaver dismisses this as nonsense, I think that we should take Feuillet at his word. A copy of Arbeau's treatise was placed in evidence at Beauchamp's lawsuit, and it would not be difficult to argue that Lorin's system of placing step symbols underneath the melody is in principle much like Arbeau's.

A more tantalizing question is whether Beauchamp's system ever bore a similar resemblance to Arbeau's. M. E. Little ('French court dance in Germany at the time of Johann Sebastian Bach: *La Bourgogne* in Paris and Leipzig', *International Musicological Society: report of the twelfth congress*, Berkeley, 1977, ed. D. Heartz and B. Wade (Kassel, 1981), cited in Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical theatre at the court of Louis XIV*) has suggested that the notations of the German dancing-master Johannes Pasch (*Maitre de Danse, oder Tantz-Meister*

[Glückstadt & Leipzig, 1705]) may be based on those of Beauchamp.

22 The hypothesis that timing of steps in Favier-notated dances was somehow 'delayed' seems unwieldy.

23 Guilcher, 'André Lorin et l'invention de l'écriture chorégraphique'.

24 In fact they don't: see J. Thorp and K. Pierce, 'Taste and ingenuity: three English chaconnes of the early eighteenth century', *Historical dance*, iii/3 (1994), pp. 3-16; K. Pierce, 'Dance vocabulary in the early 18th century as seen through Feuillet's step tables', *Proceedings Society of Dance History Scholars* (1997), pp. 227-36; J. Thorp, 'Style or stylus? Mr Isaac's dance notators in the early eighteenth century', *On common ground: proceedings of the Dolmetsch Historical Dance Society conference, Bedford, 1996*, pp. 53-67, esp. 54-5.

25 Lorin does not use a symbol for contretemp; instead he uses a *pas sauté* followed by a step (see illus. 3).

26 See n. 21 above.

27 For details see Pierce, 'Dance vocabulary in the early 18th century', pp. 229-31.

28 Feuillet, *Chorégraphie*, p. 20.

29 Feuillet, *Chorégraphie*, p. 89.

30 Raoul-Auger Feuillet, *Recueil de dances ...* (Paris, 1704; R/Farnborough, 1972).

31 Gaudrau, in his 1713 collection of dances by Pécour, is inconsistent in his use of double tie lines until about p. 27 of the section on *entrées de ballet*, at which point he seems to settle into theoretically correct usage. It is tempting to imagine that the earlier dances in that collection were notated before the 'rules of use' for double tie lines were widely understood.

32 The convention causes little confusion today thanks in part to Rameau's suggested alternative notation, which makes the timing clear.

33 This modification, attributed to Dupré, is also incorporated in Goussier's description of Beauchamp-Feuillet notation (credited to Feuillet)

in his *Encyclopédie* article.

34 Rameau's suggested changes did not catch on. The September 1732 *Mercure* reported that 'the Académie Royale de Danse, at the instigation of the Parisian dancing-master Haridouin, concluded that Rameau's system had "entirely destroyed" the old system of *chorégraphie*, and Rameau agreed not to sell or distribute any more dances using this system': see Little and Marsh, *La danse noble*, p. 124.

35 I wonder whether Feuillet's publication was an attempt to outflank Lorin, whose proposed publication Feuillet would have learned about at the Beauchamp proceeding if not before.

36 John Essex, *For the further improvement of dancing* (London, 1710; R/Farnborough, 1970). E. Pemberton, *An essay for the further improvement of dancing* (London, 1711; R/Farnborough, 1970). (Although the title is similar to Essex's, the contents are not the same.) In his preface, Pemberton makes it plain that it was Feuillet who invented this modified system. [Jacques] Dezais, *II. recueil de nouvelles contredances* (Paris, 1712; R/Farnborough, 1972).

37 Feuillet lists the usual steps for contredances, apart from those to minuet tunes, as *pas de gavotte*, *chassés de côte*, *pas de bourrée* and *demis contretemps*.

38 Translation from Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical theatre at the court of Louis XIV*, p. 91. 'Ciphers' is 'chiffres' in the original. It could mean 'numerals'—also a feature of Lorin notation—rather than 'initials'.

39 See n. 37 above.

40 Francis Peacock, *Sketches relative to the history and theory, but more especially to the practice of dancing ... Intended as hints to the young teachers of the art of dancing* (Aberdeen, 1805). He also argued there for a modification to simplify the notation of entrechats etc., but Auguste Ferrere had already adopted such a change in his 1782 manuscript: see C. G. Marsh, 'French theatrical dance in the late eighteenth century: gypsies, cloggers, and drunken soldiers', *Proceedings Society of Dance History Scholars* (1995), pp. 91-8.

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